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# TO KNOW HIM

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# To Know Him

## Five Addresses

By  
M. S. RICE

"That I may know him, and the power of  
his resurrection, and the fellowship  
of his suffering."—Philippians 3. 10



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To  
My Mother  
Who from early childhood  
to old age  
has known him  
with an ever increasing  
acquaintance



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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE Simpson Foundation for Lectures on Preaching was named for that prince among American preachers, Bishop Matthew Simpson, LL.D., the first president of Indiana Asbury-DePauw University. The Foundation was made possible by the generosity of his daughters.

In inviting Dr. Merton S. Rice, pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church, Detroit, to deliver the Series in the academic year, 1926-27, we suggested that possibly the best purposes of the Foundation could be served if he would preach on a series of related evangelical themes, rather than if he were to lecture about preaching.

Doctor Rice accepted the invitation on this basis. These Sermons were heard with great profit by a large group of college students and friends in Greencastle. He left a most invigorating and inspiring memory of high service nobly given.

L. H. MURLIN.

DePauw University,  
The President's Office,  
Greencastle, Ind.





## FOREWORD

THERE is a startling accusation, and at the same time an alarm of wonder, in the keenly chosen title of one of the justly popular books of the hour. When Mr. Barton chose to call a book concerning the most heard-about character in all the world's story, *The Man Nobody Knows*, we were all made to wonder who was at fault. His mission here was not that of a recluse. He came not to be a stranger to earth. He came as a revelation. He came as a Friend. He came as a Companion. He came as a Saviour. He gave commission to all his followers to go into all the world and make him known everywhere. Surely, there was no intention in the divine plan at concealment. Can it be true that after almost two thousand years of actual presence in this world Jesus Christ remains at the threshold of a world without an acquaintance?

M. S. R.



## JESUS

Jesus, whose lot with us was cast,  
Who saw it out, from first to last:  
Patient and fearless, tender, true,  
Carpenter, vagabond, felon, Jew:  
Whose humorous eye took in each phase  
Of full rich life this world displays,  
Yet evermore kept fast in view  
The far-off goal it leads us to:  
Who, as your hour neared, did not fail—  
The world's fate trembling in the scale—  
With your half-hearted band to dine,  
And chat across the bread and wine:  
Then went out firm to face the end,  
Alone, without a single friend:  
Who felt, as your last words confessed,  
Wrung from a proud unflinching breast  
By hours of dull ignoble pain,  
Your whole life's fight was fought in vain:  
Would I could win and keep and feel  
That heart of love, that spirit of steel.  
—The Spectator.



## TO KNOW HIM

“That I may know him.”—Phil. 3. 10.

MY faith is in Jesus Christ. My purpose in this series of brief addresses is to endeavor to place that cherished fact of my life in an un-theological manner, both in language and figure, before the attention of young people as they experience the unfolding of their intellectual lives, and awaken to the growing pains of the faith of their childhood, which must come on into manhood and womanhood with them, a manhood and a womanhood in the most lavishly equipped age life has ever known, glowing in the brilliance of new knowledge and tiptoe in expectancy toward what is soon to be found out by a persistent inquiry.

Jesus Christ, himself, is God's proposal for the solution of the world's troubles. The theology that men have built up about him has all too often been the basis of very much troublous controversy. But Christ, and not theology, is our theme now.

There is clearly disclosed in our day a strong tendency to avoid the significance of

the character of Jesus Christ as a positive force in constructive life among us, and to justify an evolutionary working of human character which will account for the oft-noted influence of our Lord. Men are diligently at work trying to explain man's improvement by man alone. The pertinent, and proper question too, has been asked, what is Christ worth to our age anyhow? It has been asked often in the inflection of an assumed critical conclusion, and left in the mere asking as though its own sufficient answer. I want us now to have audience with that question, and to face it squarely from the position of one who believes profoundly in Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour of Man, the Hope of the World.

Just before the great world catastrophe, which we have called the Great War, we were engaged in a very important and formative period of thought, which period we have since become convinced was very directly contributive to that war. You cannot plant in and under society far-reaching thoughts, and expect them to lie resultless there as mere thought, whatever mereness can mean when applied to thought. The liability of thought is, that it is always more than thought. Thought is forever running for a conclusion, and a conclu-



sion demands action. In Germany no more vigorous brain nor sparkling pen in shaping theological thought could be found than that of Harnack. In addressing a representative group of clergymen one day, he endeavored to describe the spiritual attitude of Germany at the time, and his words then are peculiarly significant in the onward light of the experience of the hard years which lay to him unconsciously just ahead. He said, "Never before were so many men filled with such longing as they are to-day for firm and consistent convictions. Men are ready now to give anything for a conviction that is a real conviction, for a belief that is really believed in. The demand is for a faith in which is a real faith. Men require convictions as to the meaning of life." That was not German thought. That is human thought now. It is a universal situation. Mankind is longing for a basis of life which shall be as credible to the mind as it is inspiring to the soul.

There is no conflict in intellect and religion. We have had numerous conflicts between theology and intellect. But theology is theory, and intellect and theory have been in controversy in every realm always. That which shall inspire the soul must likewise do no violence to the mind. God's plans in this

world must never be exposed to the sport of intellects that disproved it. The true religion is certain to be that into which the whole life can go. Real faith can never become the mockery of the intellect. Nor can real intellectual leadership ever become a liability to the truth, whether it be in religion or in any other realm. The truth of religion is ultimate truth. There cannot be any possible destiny for the intellect which will outreach the God we teach, if the God we teach is God. If intellect can ever dethrone the God we have, it is acceptable evidence that we have not God.

In an open questionnaire which I was conducting recently a man who was much troubled in his community over some very pronounced opposition he was meeting, put this question in sincere earnestness: "What would you do if you were in a community where intellectualism was the outstanding challenge of every move religion made, and set itself always in studied opposition?" It is the question of many to-day. We have allowed to grow up, in a quite common interpretation of the ordinary mind of our day, the thought that there is a genuine and a dangerous rivalry between education and religion. It has not been unusual for some with scant intellectual qualifications to attack the whole

realm of learning as though it were a menace to faith. I listened one night to a young man who had never even been privileged the helpfulness of so much as a high school education, as he preached in a little village church in defense of God against the encroachments of scholars, and rescued our faith from the immediate perils of evolution! The whole thing is presumptive. God has never chosen to submit himself to the care of any of us. True religion is interested in everything in the range of the intellect, and is not to be dislodged by it. There is no danger for truth. God is not at the mercy of some scientist who some fell day will come forth with an exposure that will show him up as a fraud. Religion is not to be driven from the earth by some super-education. Youth must never be given the idea that the mind must not be let free, that it must forever wear a short tether, for fear it might think out some way around God.

I read recently an article in one of the day's popular magazines on "The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Thought." As I remember the argument—and it did impress itself on my attention—it concerned itself with Christ's impress in a democratic interpretation of politics, education, and religion. That offered

a perfectly modern door for entrance upon a consideration of Christ's influence, and a study of what Christianity has done. Christianity is Christ active in life, Christianity must be the living evidence of an omnipotent personality. As interesting a fact as any of the many interesting facts left to the world by Napoleon is that fine testimony of many of his soldiers that his army gradually but really did come to believe that he was irresistible. Whenever for any cause discouragement went limping among those troops, the electric leader would ride forth on his white horse, and immediately an electric confidence would displace all discouragement, and the conqueror was embodied in his army. This great omnipotent Christ of ours has begun to get that expression of himself in the democracy that is running strong now into a whole world's life.

The whole tendency of our day and age is to replace power. Take influence from autocrat and aristocrat, and give it to the common people. As the common people have come possessed of what was once designed for the favored few, the burdened consciousness of responsibility has come upon the multitude as well. The reason for such a fact is genuinely interesting. Telescopes and microscopes, and

all the other complicated instruments for trailing out the long-hidden secrets of the universe and life, while they have actually discovered much, have also overwhelmed the man who makes and uses them. Our scientific expeditions into every available field have dwarfed us. We have found out such vastnesses that we are shrunken into nothingness. We find ourselves the victims of our own discoveries.

G. K. Chesterton, that always unexpected reasoner, who comes at every question from the unexpected side, has an argument in one of his earlier essays about the romantic value of diminutiveness for expeditionary purposes. He argues that instead of fancying we were giants in order to find exciting adventure, we might get the same result, and less expensively, by shriveling ourselves into such pigmy proportions that every natural thing about us would be an amazing wonder. If I were but an eighth of an inch high the pavements along Woodward Avenue would be a Sahara desert in July, flanked by the curbs of the sidewalks as huge mountain ranges. Of course if I were only one sixteenth of an inch high, the same desert would be twice as crushing.

The status of humanity toward the universe to-day is in that perspective. We have learned

such figures we are overwhelmed. Incalculable depths of the heavens! We fall back in our helplessness to express our immensities in discovery, to the flight of light for a year as a term with which to define our boundaries in figures we can still grasp. They have run even those now into ten thousand light-year boundaries, and we need a better unit of expression. Immensity of suns, and stars, and spaces! When one of old under the spell of the little horizons of his consciousness cried out, "What is man that thou art mindful of him!" he gave us a self-revising estimate of our ever enlarging wonder. Our stature is the same. Our universe is immeasurably multiplied.

What has happened to this Christ of ours in this great expanding day? Have we out-distanced him? Have we destroyed him?

Jesus Christ must be the eternal contemporary. His dominant personality must not pale in any advancing day, nor must the characteristic of his divine excellence require any defense in a changing standard of living among men. His critics of the future must be compelled to bring in, as have the critics of the past, a verdict of his changeless perfection. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" must ring on forever across every inquiring



age, as it has rung in challenging meaning down to this hour in the dominant confidence of the truth that calls it.

Jesus Christ is not merely one of the great leaders and masters of the human story. Christianity's position to-day needs a profound recognition of Christ's solitariness. The popular tendency toward harmonization of multiple religious claims, instead of generating a secure tolerance upon which to found a permanent position, is the rather a subtle influence that destroys the vitality of all religion. You cannot harmonize religions. The reason is simple. Religion is singular, not plural. God must be exclusive. The multiplicity of gods is the destruction of all gods. This is not the sign of bigotry. It is the recognition of the fundamental fact which underlies religion. When the son of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise recently gave up his study in preparation as a rabbi, and turned from Judaism, he made this statement which was widely copied throughout the world: "Judaism as a religion has ceased to play a vital part in Jewish life. Judaism the religion cannot survive." I do not put this here in any gloating manner as to Judaism at all. I note it as a fact of immediate news to support the contention I now am making, that all religious claims will

have to face the same judgment. Christianity is ready to accept the situation which is precipitated thus in the recognition that the only reason we have enthusiasm about this Christ of ours is because we do profoundly believe him to be the Christ of God. We are Christians only because we believe Christ is absolute Truth. We believe Christianity is the only true religion.

Such a belief compels an espousal of endeavor to establish it everywhere. Our belief can be made good only by universal and exclusive sovereignty. Of course this will be challenged. This is exactly what the Christian campaign for the conversion of the world means. True faith will prove itself so only by its survival.

I saw somewhere in my recent reading a phrase that leaped into my memory without impressing me from whence it came. The phrase was "Christ the World-Way." I like the phrase. I have been saturating my soul and mind with that fine volume from Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*. The only criticism I can make on it is, that the book is bigger than its title. The author has written a universal fact in local terms. It is the Christ of the World Road, Christ of Humanity's Road. What he is for India, he

is for China, and England, and Mexico and America.

My hope for the world, and my confidence which grows out of that hope well grounded, is that one day this whole world is going to find and take that safe, divine, delivering way of Jesus Christ. Amid the many things he did not say, in that impossible attempt Mr. Wells recently made to write a world history in one volume, was this impressive sentence: "The Galilæan has been too great for our small hearts." That great solemn fact is arising to convincing proportions around the world. Back of very much of the very significant unrest of the world is this great Christ. There will never be any real rest in a wrong world while the divine way of righteousness is disclosed before us. The growing passion of a needy world is to know him. To know him, as the sure way out of every wrong! To know him, as the heartening way out of every sorrow! To know him, as the assuring way out of every sin! To know him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Christianity is a great personal force and personal leadership. I am fully convinced that the supreme moment for the Church of Christ thus far in all its history is right now, and right in this fact, that humanity has come on

through enough to now bring it ready for conviction. Neither wealth, nor indulgence, nor science can minister to humanity at its genuine point of need. The sorrow of the world is not because it is poor or ignorant. It is because it is evil. Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to this age, not because it needs help in a hard struggle to dig out a living, not because it needs a great guide into the confounding mysteries of nature about it, but because he is the Saviour from the power and dominion of sin. A few years ago I sat in an audience listening to a preacher preach. The story of Jesus was told as a cold historical fact of a life that had been lived almost two thousand years ago. The life was beautifully lived. The story was beautifully told. A good, great man had died misunderstood and even hated, but still patient and kind. The preacher said in the most appealing phrases he could coin that it was indescribably pathetic and cruel to slay a good, clean, loving, serving man, who was misinterpreted in his goodness. I went away from that service with the company to the life of an ordinary town. Three days later I sat at the bedside of a dying man. The preacher whose sermon I mention, sat also in the same room. We had each been requested by the man who was dy-

ing to come. He deliberately, and in that bold manner that recognized need, asked us if we would pray for him. We kneeled with his gathered family beside that bed. I well remembered the day in that same cottage I had watched the last hour beside the wife and mother, who had gone away in a fine glow of faith.

The other preacher prayed first. He prayed to the dead man Jesus, of whom he had preached. I never could understand why he should pray to a dead man. But he did so, and I would not seem here to dare the least irreverence in placing, as I well remember, the opening cry of that strange prayer—"O Brother Jesus." I cannot forget it. In a compromising and complimentary message, he delivered to a dead man, a prayer in petition just as he had preached of a dead man. There was nothing to pray to but a good memory and a clean example, left in a world that had misunderstood him, and killed him for his goodness. I wondered! Why pray to a dead man in the presence of and for the help of a dying man? I would walk along through the life of such a character with praises and thanksgiving, but Calvary would seal my lips and quench my prayers on the threshold of a saddened ministry, if that were

all I had. If my Lord were but a man, then let me act toward him as a man, and spread over him no garment of worship.

The dying man turned feebly on his pillow and laying his cold hand on mine said, "Now you pray." Never in all my life did I open my heart to God in faith in Jesus Christ with more confidence than I did at that never-to-be-forgotten moment to me, with the dying hand of John Elston clutching its last hopefulness as he went away. I said, "O Christ, here is a dying man. But thou hast been here and art now beside us to show us how to die into everlasting life. We do believe in Jesus Christ. We call upon thee now only because we believe thou art the Saviour of the trusting soul, and now as we go stumbling down into this valley of the shadow of death here, we can see gleaming beside us the light thou hast put there, and which can never, never be put out." And John Elston went on calm and unafraid.

The story of this Christ of ours is forever written thus into life, victoriously. What marvel he is! How he clings round the finest ambitions of our race! How he girds the troubled souls of men and women and children! How he has always made himself felt in the crisis of the great conflict always on between right and wrong! No darkness so



dark, no ignorance so dense, no sin so sinful  
but this Christ can meet and conquer.

“The highest place that heaven affords  
Is his, is his by right,  
The King of kings, and Lord of lords,  
And heaven’s eternal Light:

“The joy of all who dwell above,  
The joy of all below,  
To whom he manifests his love,  
And grants his name to know.”

—Thomas Kelly, The Methodist Hymnal, No. 173.

## CHRIST A MAN

“Behold the man.”—John 19. 5.

God in Christ got and gets very close to mankind. It is his divine step across the chasm from the infinite to the finite which provides a possible contact. It is shorter from the infinite to the finite than from the finite to the infinite.

Jesus Christ, strong Son of God, needs now a more vital adaptation to the ordinary life of our day. God has arranged in him all the sufficient supply every human need can ever demand. All that is now needed is that he shall be actually realized in life.

I endeavored recently to preach a sermon to the general theme, “What is Christ Worth to Our Day?” It enlarged in its preparation until I found myself forced in the short bounds of one address endeavoring to match Jesus Christ against any and every need of the world. It seemed in announcement a mere general theme around which to preach a sermon of general declarations. But when I attempted to preach it, it broke itself into various illustrative parts, and definite, de-

manding incidents were so convincing from the life I had just met on the streets, in the shops, in the homes, and flown from the columns of the papers, that the whole theme was lost in a narration of a compilation of Christian applications. The crisis God drew in a whole world's life when he sent his Son in answer to a world's sin and suffering, leaped before my mind in that glowing phrase of balanced alternative, which I believe was the creation of Sir Robertson Nicholl, *Christ or Chaos*. God saw that always. It is the only worthy putting of the measureless meaning that must inhere in so great a fact as that Christ came at all. He never would have been assigned to any smaller venture. It is Christ or chaos. The sooner the crisis of that great alternative is appreciated by the church, the better will be the passion of our application. My faith, both individual and social, is that it is Christ or chaos.

A man gave me one day, bound in a lovely individual binding, one of the famous books of the Old Testament. I thanked him for it, because it was in itself a lovely gift, and in its contents a priceless treasure, and in the flavor of the giver a special trophy to keep. But as I took it he said, in a quite strange manner, and, I could tell, a manner argumen-

tative, endeavoring to steady a somewhat troubled intellectual condition: "But I cannot reach God. I am too small; my arm is too short. My mind is too scant. No one can ever make me believe I can reach God." As he said so he settled back in a sense of security in a position of defense religiously, made of the broken planks of his own inability.

I answered him as carefully as I could find words to say it, that he was not far from a Christian line of real experience. Long, long ago man had found out he could not reach God. But that is not the limit of his religious relationship. There is much to religion besides what man can do, or cannot do. In fact, man's part is the least of it. My religious experience lies not in that I cannot reach God, but rather in the fact that God can reach me. That is the very message of Christianity. Jesus Christ is that great reach of God.

I have no long, finely worded formula to apply to the ills of men. I have no long, wrought-out mysteriously phrased philosophy of moral reform. I have no long code of conduct upon which I propose to evolve a new world of social relations. I have no complicated theological creeds and doctrines to which I insist for subscription. My faith is in Jesus Christ. I believe him to be God's Son. I be-

lieve him to be man's Saviour, I believe him to be the world's hope, I propose to preach him against every trouble.

There is a very impressive verse in Matthew where the writer has kept the very passion of the conviction of the speaker in the finely preserved sentence, "Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth." "The way" is the impressive part of the verse to me. The reference to Jesus Christ in the New Testament is never a mere general assertion that would write him into much other company. He is not spoken of as a way; he is the discernor of, and is himself called "the way." That is the preservative of my Christian enthusiasm. I believe it profoundly. I am not seeking for some great general grounds upon which we can without controversy enthrone all religions. It is the genuineness of the leadership of Jesus Christ that wins all my allegiance. I believe him to be the way out of every wrong. I believe him to be the way out of every sorrow. I believe him to be the way out of all our sin. I have a very interesting picture I cut from the London Times recently, a picture of an ancient brick just brought to world attention from Ur-of-the-Chaldees. The ancient buildings now being examined are almost five thousand

years old. Upon many of those bricks they have found the finger prints of the workmen, who had them in hand when they were soft. On the brick whose picture I have is the plain footprint of a man. He stepped squarely in the middle of that brick. He didn't sign the print. It might have been Abraham. The clear lines of that bare foot have been preserved across the centuries. This great divine human Guide of ours, whose credentials none can dispute to-day, has pressed the clear mark of his purpose into life everywhere. Across the centuries that print grows plainer. "This is the way; walk ye in it." Oh world of strife! Oh world of sin! Oh world of death! Here is the way out. He has shown us how to be men.

The manhood of Jesus Christ must be outstanding. It must stand unscathed. He must never falter in any of the fundamentals by which we measure manhood. Even though our very own imperfection may forbid our possession of a perfect scale of measure, the fairest idea we can dream in conduct must not be broken in him. He must not only not break my ideals, he must likewise positively embody the characteristics of manhood's highest expression. If the life of Jesus Christ will not stand the extreme test of all manliness every-

where, in every separate action and detail, then the Christian hypothesis breaks down.

One day while wandering among some ancient tombs in a quaint old English burial ground beside an ancient crude stone church, near a little village, Godalming, I noted a neglected, long moss-grown stone, and in mere curiosity sat down to dig out the moss and read again whatever may have been lettered there long years ago. I was richly rewarded to find these fine words of confident compliment, "Think what a man ought to be, and he was that." I dared not try to guess how true the compliment was of that unknown man. I sat right there alone, calling the roll of manhood's expectancy and standing them against this great Christ Man of ours. He must not fail us. Not in one single thing can he dare fall short. We can get along, and keep our way even when our ordinary heroes stumble. They hurt us at every falter, but we understand. We are used ere this, down the long, long way our blundering race has come, to making charitable allowances and framing explanatory excuses for the ways of even our noblest and bravest heroes. Humans stumble. We all know what falter means. We drag our feet often in the royal march of manhood. But we can make no excuse, nor bring any ex-

planation for the Son of man, the Son of God. His life must stand the test under every circumstance, and at every moment, or the very foundation of our confidence is broken up. If Jesus Christ stumbles, then it is certain that God has not revealed himself in man to men, and we must hush the songs of hope we have been singing in helpfulness to a world everywhere in need of the very message our high hopes announce.

The familiar story of Diogenes, the cynical old philosopher of Athens, has been told to an ever-expectant smile everywhere. It is, however, an exhortive story. Back and forth along the streets of the proud city he wandered, swinging his lantern, even in the daytime, into every face. When someone's curiosity at last made bold to ask for some reason for such action, he answered in his cynical confidence, "I am hunting a man," and went on swinging his pale lantern down the street.

Of course the expressed conviction that made its curious registry in Diogenes thus is the very same conviction that, without swinging lantern and such extreme conduct, has nevertheless been held in our hearts about our race ever since sin tripped us and wrote "Failure" across our brows. I have wished Diogenes had gone on hunting, until one day



he had unexpectedly swung his little lantern into the face of Jesus Christ. I do not know that Diogenes would have been able to really recognize him. I have no record of the standard he carried for proof of his findings. There were those who hated him, and who even put him to death. But every hatred they hurled at him and every spike they drove into his kindly hands, but served the more to reveal his perfection, until now having met all a misunderstanding world could do, and having turned back the very gates of death, and having emerged out of it all upon the ages, with all he could with divine fulfillment make his great life to mean, he stands before the world the measure of a man. There is not one element of true manhood Jesus Christ fails to embody.

I have sought thus, without reserve, to state the issue of Christ's manhood in its absolute essential. We ask no quarter. We are just as much concerned in the genuineness of his character as are those who would disbelieve him. If our Lord is, in truth, the perfection of our humanity, then in him must be manifested our human nature in such unmistakable manner that it shall compel recognition by our most perfect standards as the truest, strongest, and best.

This strenuous day of ours, that is demanding from men now such brave and distinctly manly qualities, if they are to claim leadership, will not accept a weak, timid, sentimental Christ. Our Lord has suffered at the hands of the painters. No matter what their genius, they have almost unanimously adopted a tender feminine figure and left with it all a feminine impression. Of course I appreciate the fact that it has been done as they explain to magnify what they call the spiritual content of it all. But they have done exactly what we do not want done in the manifestation of spirituality now. We want the manhood of a man's spirituality to be a strongly virile evidence. We want the spiritual fact of life to be evidenced in a tread of commandingness. Jesus Christ brought the might of real spirituality into manhood's ways. I say the Christ of the artists lacks very greatly. The Christ of the pictures is not the Christ to dominate humanity. He may draw pity. He may generate sympathy. But the Christ who is to master this world will not come to that mastery along an approach of pity and sympathy. The Christ mankind demands and surely has a right to expect, is one who, with a commanding manhood, will make goodness and all the incorporate principles of our faith

commanding in presence before the world. Our day eagerly awaits the manliness of Him who will force into the ranks of a whole world's appreciation the virility of goodness. We yearn for the strong commandingness of virtue. We seek the regnancy of honesty. We have a yearning for the evidences of the ruggedness of purity, the triumph of faith, the dominance of hope. The manhood of religion we confidently expect in Christ.

There seems to be abroad an assumptive manliness about impurity, and all the things we know are not good. There is a swagger about much that is evil which lays confident claim to a conduct called manly. It would assume a certain timidity of virtue which would make it appear weak and in need of protection. Of course this is an utterly false position, but it has worked itself into a strange place of recognition. We await the day of regnant righteousness. There is nothing in life so strong as are those fine virtues which cling about Christianity, and Jesus Christ is the very figure who carries them all into perfection. Our day needs to know him, actually matching and fulfilling all the highest standards of manly life current among men. Behold the man! We hesitate not to point to him out of every conflicting

motive that may be troubling our age. He fulfills every expectancy. He baffles every lower appeal. One great mad day in Paris, when a mob of men were sweeping through the streets in irresistible fury, that overwhelmed police and soldiers, there was seen ahead of them mounted on a box with his hands upheld toward them the tragic figure of a white-haired old man. The leader of that mob suddenly leaped before them and cried, as he recognized De l'Eure, "Citizens of France, sixty years of pure life desire to address you." And there stood the dominance of purity where all else had failed. With almost two thousand years of accumulated perfection in manhood Jesus Christ arises before our day.

Whatever the mystery of the incarnation might have meant from a theological point of view, it nevertheless demands in all our minds the vehicle of human perfection. We could not expect divinity to be brought to us in a broken vessel. It did not make Jesus Christ something else than a man. Had it done that, then all the value there was in his life as a pattern for humanity, or as an example in temptation, would be gone.

The genius that inheres in that famous book of Mr. Sheldon's, *In His Steps*, is to be found

in the universal admission that the sure guidance for human conduct lies in the way of Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to discover that way. Whenever our Lord says "Follow me," "I have given you an example," he declares conclusively that he is like us, and that whatever may have been that divinity which filled him, it has not changed the humanity which was thus filled, into something which henceforth ceased to be human. There are those who disagree with what Mr. Sheldon laid down as the ways of our Lord. Newspaper men have opposed his contention, not because they thought the basis of the claim was not correct, but only because they were not sure that Mr. Sheldon knew just how Jesus would run a newspaper. Good singers read the beautiful story of what a fine singer did with her talent in the spell of her Lord's way. They did not oppose the idea that if they really knew what Jesus would do they would have a safe basis for conduct. They did, however, doubt that in everything he would do as Mr. Sheldon thought he would. There has been no dispute at the ideal in the way of Jesus' example. The dispute has been as to the certain discovery of that ideal.

Take the motive of conduct as spread upon the larger field of general convictions. As a

man in a world of men can I discover in him any helpfulness in framing my action resultant upon receiving intentional injury? That is one of the hard places in conduct. I so easily lose control of myself there. The gate of resentment flies open easily. The natural bent of my conduct is to strike back. What would Christ have a man do in such a situation? Well, I am very sure in my answer to that: He forgave injury. At once I am fronted with the conclusion for myself, then, that forgiveness is a higher law of manhood than resentment. I might easily follow thus all the great general lines of conduct to find this confounding perfection of our Master before us. He forever lures us by the very elements in life we admire and court; and yet is ever so constantly superior to all our best efforts to attain our ideals that we are driven to recognize how bold is the contrast of his actual living and ours.

Never in all the days gone, no matter how important they have been, never was the real manliness of Christ so essential a matter to have impressed into active convictions of life as it is at this very hour. We need men to be men after the pattern of our Christ. A committee came to see me recently with a request that I come to a great industrial city to de-

liver a series of addresses to men. They said they had a very peculiar situation in their city. I inquired with interest into the nature of that peculiarity, for unusual situations in men's lives to-day interest me. They said, "Our folks have grown up amid a fiercely materialistic influence, and the measure of manhood, which seems to have stamped itself convincingly into their estimation, is materialistic rather than ethical, moral and Christian."

I answered them that their contention was good, and most surely needed a square opposition, the only thing the matter with their position being that it was peculiar. The very thought that a committee should seek to impress me, from the midst of my own materialistic situation, that they were peculiar, made me remember that I had recently been down in the country among the Indians where oil has been found underlying the prairies of their long idleness, now to set them automobile mad, and almost every other sort of mad, that goes along with this rushing materialistic day. The trouble on our streets, and in our offices, and at our flaming forges and on our oil-flushed farms, is not that men are not believers in the fact that a man is really bigger than his possessions. Men believe that. Men do actually agree in their convictions of

human life as measured in the faultless principles of Jesus Christ, but they walk in conduct straight across those convictions. They agree in argument that the eternal elements of human character far outrank in importance all the material things for which we strive so hard, but under the hard heels of their everyday life they crush into dust their actual convictions, and madly lose themselves in their strenuous effort to practice contrary to their belief. I know nothing else to call such a fact, men standing money-mad, covered with the dust of their actual ideals, and sweat-stained in their hard pursuit of lesser things, I say I know nothing else to call such a fact than bald hypocrisy. Men are not living up to the ideals they have. It is not ideals we lack. What we need most to-day is power to realize our ideals.

Several years ago, while I was living at the head of Lake Superior, a terrific winter gale blew across that great inland sea for three days and nights, with a temperature ten degrees below zero. Many ships were broken in that storm. The Crescent City, a splendid steel steamer, was thrown upon the rocks and smashed against the great cliffs as though she had been but a tossing raft. I sat with the captain at a meal on the broken hull of the



great ship several days after the storm was past, and the men were at work at salvage. That rugged sailor told me of the fury of the storm. How, through all the long hours, day and night, he had fought it with all the working powers the great ship possessed. He said that hour after hour the storm simply threw him back squarely against every effort of his engines. "So severe was the sea," said he, "that for the last two hours of our struggle we had our engines running full speed ahead and both our anchors out clutching at the bottom for helpful hold, but we actually did not change the reading of our compass by one quarter of a point." Good compass, good anchors, good engines. But that mad storm tossed compass, anchors, engines, ship and all together a wreck upon the rocks. I am saying that mere ideals will not save us. Our day is great with ideals. We have multitudes with ideals as fair as any mankind has ever built. But lacking in the very same thing that old ship lacked, they are tossed as it was in the storm, because they have not power to realize their ideals.

Jesus Christ, the great Son of man, who lifted his ideal upon the shoulder of divinity to its complete realization, has a message for mankind. He is the most preachable theme our

race can hear. He presents to us perfectly the world-tie of manhood. We think of him as of no particular type of man, but, rather, as a Man. You must grow big to get a human judgment. Folks generally are classed by nation or race. We are holden by the bonds of littleness. We cannot escape our local boundaries. Not so Jesus Christ. The very effort men sometimes make to call him a Jew always seems strained. We cannot think of him as a Jew. He has escaped all the trammels of littleness. He has fled all bounds of geography. He is a Man. The one type we possess to-day. None other has escaped into the human liberties. I was interested in a very fine composite picture of Jesus I saw. It had been made by having wrought into it the united resultant of all the great pictures of the Christ that could be found. The result was human. This great cosmopolite has given us the type of man. He fits men everywhere. He is the compress of God, so that demanding reason can feel over his infinitude. Would that we who have been told to declare him, might better be able to bring every one to see him and to know him standing ever beside us in the way.

What man needs to know is Christ with us in life just as we must meet it. Is it poverty

that drives you? The keen tooth of that famished wolf gnaws a great multitude. To be poor! Well, Jesus Christ struggled through poverty, and knew the contrast too, and after all the real pang of poverty is to be known by those who once were rich. Born in a stable, cradled in a borrowed manger, and buried in a loaned grave, this divine poor man is preachable to the poor.

Are you consumed with that keen pain attendant upon toiling without appreciation, the bitterness of thanklessness? I know how keen that hurt is. You, worked down to the very edge, and the reluctant world drops with bitter calculation a few coppers into your worn hands, and never seems to string your slack sinews with a word of cheer, while crowds go yonder to line with gold someone's purse who merely dances for their amusement. Listen, you downcast heart, regardless of what your disappointment may be built upon, Jesus Christ, conscious of whom he was, endured the scorn and neglect of those he came to save, and even met the complete refusal of a world of thankless men, and all he got for it was a cross to die on and a loaned grave to lie in. Mark what encouragement he has brought to the discouraged. Count the pulse of his sympathy for those in

trouble. Mark his absolute gentleness, when he possessed all power to crush every opposition. Hear his cordial invitation to the weary and heavy-laden. See the sinful souls that hunted him out for helpfulness. Thank God for a refuge for sinners. They could go nowhere else. And sin-broken men and women, ever since he called them, have been finding their new chance in righteousness.

I cannot list here even the brief summary of what this means, but amid all the privileges which have ever come to my life none can compare to that I feel in pointing folks to this Christ of ours. I know enough of life to have found some conclusions. I know somewhat of the hunger of life. I know somewhat of the bitter cries that well up out of the depths of human need. I know convincingly how heavily the sad figure of sorrow comes trampling across the soul. There is no use now, to life as we know it to be, to preach lovely philosophies and fairest ethics. Jesus Christ is before you.

## CHRIST A TEACHER

"Thou art a teacher come from God."—John 3. 2.

WHO can show us the way? Who can lead us to the light? Who can save us from our ignorance? Who can bring us to know the truth? Such has been the appeal of mankind always, as it has stumbled and sought for its destiny in the eternal truth ahead. Has Jesus Christ anything to teach to such an age as is this in which we live?

In a recent article in one of our better type of magazines appeared a very thought-provoking straight-aimed comment on the religious condition of to-day. In that article toward its close were these well-chosen words: "The twentieth century is sacrificing itself to goods and appetite and comfort and conceit. As long as it continues to do so, as long as these seem satisfying ends to its new, crude, and suddenly wealthy citizens, it is unlikely that any more subtle religion can make much headway. Jesus of Nazareth is an enigma to the moment. Occasionally we find somebody trying to dress up the Christ in modern terms, presenting him as a go-getter,

a country-clubber, a master of advertising psychology. There is no god but our gods. We will make Jesus into our image. Popular though this sort of thing may be, it is, of course, not Christianity. Whatever else Jesus may mean, he is, in historical religion at any rate, the antithesis of all that our day deems of most worth. He is poor, when we would be rich. He seems to regard chastity as normal and healthy. To him comfort matters little, one way or the other. He is the incarnation of humility. It can hardly be expected that he should be the chosen God of an adolescent civilization intent upon the hungry search for superficiality." (Bernard I. Bell, in *Atlantic Monthly*. Reprinted by permission.)

The very argument of Mr. Bell is to me the sure credential of the qualification of Christ as the teacher for our day. Not to find it an easy task in conformity, but rather to find it a challenging task in correction. In him we are to find the ideals our misled age most needs. I remember an incident that has come across all the centuries from those great days of Athens' artistic triumphs. A young student traveler was privileged to be in the famous city but one day. Instead of wandering about in mere admiration of the always wonderful statuary and architecture, he de-

cided, rather, that he would seek out Phidias himself, the great master under whose unequaled genius so much of those crowding wonders had been wrought, and see if it were possible to find from him the secret of that shaping chisel. The great artist listened with interest to the request of the visitor, and then replied: "Of course one day is an impossible period in which to explain the secret of art. It is, however, long enough to look upon a single specimen of statuary which in itself does embody all the philosophy of the beautiful in art." So saying he had unveiled before the inquirer the statue of Minerva. It is thus to me this Christ of ours is opportune in all his character to teach us the truth, and even in a strangely misled age, with its enthusiasms wrongly directed, to still confound it with the truth.

It is to me an always remarkable and very worthy fact to ponder that whatever may be thought of the Messianic claims of Jesus Christ by those who refuse to accept him as divine, it nevertheless stands clear that his pre-eminence as a teacher of truth and morality is universally conceded. Infidels and skeptics and agnostics vie with each other in paying highest tribute to him thus. Leaving out the divine claims and accepting him only

as a teacher of morals and ethics, there have never been paid to Christ any more glowing compliments than those from so-called unbelievers. A teacher! a wonderful teacher! "Rabbi, we behold thou art a teacher." They go enthusiastically that far. I am asking now that they shall complete the passage and add, "A teacher come from God."

A number of years ago there was published a book which to me has had an ever-increasing interest. I read it when first published with great profit, and as a constant stimulant to my thought. It has lost nothing with the years to me. It was written by Dr. Fitchett and is entitled *The Beliefs of Unbelief*. In that book the author makes use of the concealed arguments which lie in and under such facts as I have just mentioned, the acceptability of this teacher whose character they challenge. If we scout the claim of the divinity of Christ, we find ourselves at once in the throes of a worse dilemma. It is preposterous to attempt to think that a little, poor, obscure Jew, born in a manner that would compel explanation, and associated all his life with the most humble things and places and people, that such a mere Jew should leave the world two thousand years ago, and still leave the world full of himself, and to compel the world



to recognize in itself from century to century, and even now from year to year, the constantly increasing content of this same Jew, until to-day in a whole world we have found that the only real commanding figure that has ever arisen to world-proportions is this same Jew. Before the self breakdown of such an idea as that and the historical fact of what is world knowledge to-day, as this Christ has actually achieved his pre-eminence, we say in convinced reverence, "We too, know that thou art a teacher come from God."

How he has cleared our thought! How he has opened our vision! How he has girded our purpose! How he has lifted our ideals! How he has stiffened our courage! How he has restated our values! Our day does not realize what it owes to Jesus Christ in the commonest standards of its living. Yet, great that these ordinary things are, and meaningful though his service here has been to a so-called practical day, it is not in these we prize him most. Maybe we do at times so get our eyes set upon the plainer practical things of life as to draw hurried judgments that these are the things we prize most. But we will not have gone far ere we shall have been forced to appreciate that we soon outreach all these lesser things, and stand in our greatest need

with impotent hands outstretched to God for help.

I believe, with all the enthusiasm of a life that really loves this good world to-day, in doing our very best here and now. I would see growing out of this world we have been handed to subdue the very best and most improved world that human genius can work out. I believe that every diamond we snatch from the dull clay and polish into reflecting beauty makes the world that much more lovely. I would polish them all. I believe he is indeed a benefactor of us all who can make two blades of grass grow where grew but one before. I believe in throwing the belts of our factories around the strong shoulders of every stream that is spilling its usefulness down over the rocks, and in doing so I am sure we have made a richer and more useful world. I believe in the enriching contribution of the genius that can touch a mountain of mere marble into a graceful cathedral adorned with lovely statuary. There is not a single good, helpful, beautiful, useful thing we can do that I fail to have a real interest in having done. But I do believe that above and beneath and all around all these good things rises the supreme question of God as infinitely superior to them all. The man who is right on the

question of God may stumble along poorly shod on this earth—he does not have to, nor is he to be condoned for doing so—but he still may stumble along poorly shod here, but he will strike hand with infinite truth at last. The man who has not found God, I care not what else he may have possessed—and I do not say that he lost God by the possession, I only seek to say carefully, that if he possess all else and shall have failed to find God—has made havoc of life. “Oh that I knew where I might find God” has been the cry men have always uttered out of the darkness of godlessness.

It is all important what men think about God. This is perhaps one of the very most crucial hours of the world's life; an hour when we are trying to pick up all the genuine values that are to be found after one of the most crushing tragedies that ever shook the world; an hour when we are seeking for some way of life, and manner of conduct, and motive in relationship, that will in some way vindicate those of us who have lived on out of such a death-swept yesterday as is just gone, into this obligated to-day with which we have been intrusted. We have just laid aside the reddest sword mankind ever drew. We are feeling about for some surer foundation upon

which to rear our civilization than that from which it so lately staggered. Mankind as a whole stands wondering if there is not somewhere someone who can show us a better way. When men had learned to read the bloodiest page man had ever heretofore written, the page of the French Revolution, and had recognized that it had been scrawled by atheism, and then again came stumbling and choking through an even immeasurably worse and more bloody chapter, only to discover that it had been dictated by materialism, which is only a modern and more scientific way of spelling atheism, they turn and cry from the very depths of anguish and need: Who will show us the way? Who will help us to get up from the dust and sorrow of it all, and write God back into this world's life?

Never did the world need God as it needs him now. Never did Jesus Christ stand forth so essential to all life means as now. He comes with the credentials of his authority. He comes to declare God. He is "The Word," "Christ the articulate speech of God." And the thing for this world of ours to do with all its questions, and sorrows, and strifes, and hatreds, and fears, and ignorances, and sins, is to come and sit at the feet of this great "Teacher come from God."

What a patient teacher he, as he sets himself to bring to practical knowledge this world so unchristian in its ways and yet so essentially Christian if it is to endure. That keen answer, that was made from so many in unison that no one knows who said it, which was shouted at the claim of some when the Great War broke in fury across the world and started the cry, "Christianity has failed," carried a patient fact of God with man, "It has never been tried yet." What a Teacher who will thus have labored with a slow learning world across centuries and never lose heart! I have read that wonderful story of Doctor Edward Seguin, and with what patience he has wrought in the treatment of mental diseases. His theory and his practices have been revolutionary. He has proven by almost superhuman patience that idiocy is not caused by some mental deficiency, but that it is merely arrested mental development. Up to a certain degree we call an ignorant man an ignoramus. If he does not know that much, he is an idiot. Such a fact, once established, brings hope into an otherwise hopeless field of treatment. The long, patient labors of Doctor Seguin to establish that fact is one of the romances of human service. For eight long years he worked with only the slightest

evidence of any progress in but one out of every one hundred cases tried. From early morning till late at night, for all the years of his labors, he sought to inculcate something into helpless minds. He succeeded in getting one little girl to make a simple gesture correctly once after having failed for one hundred consecutive times. Upon that one correct effort he built up hope in the darkness. He so eagerly pursued that feeble response that he was rewarded at last by seeing that young girl brought out into her natural mental powers.

Recently in our Sunday school our people were fascinated with the wonderful story of a plain, patient man from the missionary work in Africa. He told us how he landed something over twenty years ago in a field of densest heathenism. He was the lone Christian man amid a tribe of cannibals. They worshiped by human sacrifice. Their great hideous altar, upon which the human victims were slain, stood in the center of the village, and all about it lay the skulls and bones of the victims who had died there. He had no language with which to speak to them but the language of love, and a genuine interest in their welfare. It was difficult to find an entrance for the word he had come so far to

say. For one long month he labored in vain. Six months dragged by in distressing failure. A year found his reported results as zero. He made no complaint. I know where there is a preacher in a great city who is ready to leave that charge because he has had a good year's result and fears another year may show a decrease in the reports. That patient missionary saw not one single evidence of any result whatever at the close of his second year. The third year brought the same report. The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh years were recorded in his story as blank. The eighth year, he noted, one man came as an inquirer during the year. Two years later he became a convert and acknowledged Jesus Christ. This, of course, brought marked persecution. But the fact I seek now is that to-day that whole tribe is Christian, and close beside the old altar of human sacrifice stands the church of Jesus Christ, and the sacrifices of the olden days are to-day only haunting memories to the older people there.

Such incidents of patient devotion and love thrill our hearts with admiration. But they are mere types of the patient endeavor of this "Teacher come from God," and of this divine task to which he is set to show a whole world the way to its saving truth.

The world waits on Christ to find out God. It is an interesting thought to try to think out the possible story of a human babe to whom all human association was denied. Kept alive, but never to know the meaning or the influence of a mother. Never permitted to see another human being. Never to hear a human voice. To know no home, hear no song, answer no call. The very thought of so homeless, friendless a creature will haunt your imagination. In such a human skull would doubtless remain a useless bundle of brains, and the very reverse idea of evolution is the theory now advanced by some, in a realm where conjecture seems so safe and easy. They imagine that an abandoned child wandering off alone would degenerate into the habits of monkeys. Hence we have some new suggestions these days along this uncertain line where theory easily thrives. The point I want here, however, is this, that even though human intelligence be far from developed in a world with such unbounded privileges as is this, the new-born child still finds itself where its powers can accept the tasks of our civilization, and be led out to maturity to partake in full of the complex life of our day. This is but the faintest parallel to the ministry of our Christ with a race of men such as are we.



Groping about in the darkness, helpless alone to find out God, nothing has ever been heard across this none-too-glad world, more tragic with helplessness than the cry of our race out into the night, "Oh that I knew where I might find God!" It was to that cry Jesus Christ came, and in words as simple and convincing as truth alone can be, he portrayed the beauty and majesty of God a Father. He offered no new philosophy. He fashioned no new definitions. He framed no rigid dogmas. He simply unveiled before the eager human vision the Infinite One, whose solicitude for man was such that none was too small or too great to be loved. He taught us to recognize our God, clad in all those things which fascinate and do not confound the intellect, and which command all the affections of our hearts.

Jesus Christ came to show us God. He flung the blazing truth of that great name into every nook and cranny of existence and set the gleam of it against every shadow, when he unveiled him before us as a Father, great and loving; a Father whose divine purpose actually throbs in every pulse of the human story; a Father whose wisdom is equal to every emergency of life; a Father who counts us all as his own children; who has his hand on the darkness as well as on the light; who

counts with deepest interest the pulse of pain as well as the leaping throb of joy; who yearns for and loves each one of his children, no matter how far he may roam. This is the great yearning fact of God which none of the religions of men had ever incorporated until this "Teacher come from God" made it clear.

The Fatherhood of God cannot be taught to this world without the resultant conclusion, the Brotherhood of Man, and Jesus Christ stands before the world the prime exponent of this great truth which is running, in these democratic days with such consuming consequences throughout the whole earth. It is good news to the long backward nations, and it is a conscripting obligation to those nations that make bold to claim a position of forwardness in civilization, whatever such claim may mean. It is a bit disquieting to some of our loudest claims of forwardness in the principles of the Divine Teacher, in whose inspiration we claim to have constructed our civilization and to have given it the distinguished name of Christian, that in difficult days such as we have recently lived and died through, the common brethren should have been found clutching at each other's throats, and mingling their mad blood as brothers of a common faith. But this great Teacher and Brother of

us all does not give up, even there, his teaching of this great fact that is bound one long awaited day to bring in the federation of all mankind. It is a toilsome thing to teach to men and to find woven into the fabrics of their conduct the high ideals of Christian faith. I was conducting a series of meetings in a Western city and Mr. Eugene Debs came into that city unexpectedly, through a change in his schedule, to lecture. A committee of his followers came to see me and asked me if I would not bring my audience to the auditorium where Mr. Debs was to speak, that they might learn from him how we could do at once what the Christian Church has been unable to accomplish in almost two thousand years. But Mr. Debs is gone now, and his followers, with all the rest of us, must recognize that it is no hurrying process to teach this world of mankind to live in the ways of high idealism. Of course if we could shut ourselves up to a dream world, and construct an ideal humanity as a basis, we could hand them an ideal civilization. Any dreamer of Utopia can do that. But the unideal humanity, to whom such ideals must be submitted, will soon shatter them all. Jesus Christ is set to the establishment of an ideal society, by building it upon regenerated individuals of that so-

ciety. It is a basic social position. Christ walks amid all the ignorance of this world's darkest places, and seeks there to kindle the light of truth. He walks amid all the vileness of this world's most staggering wickedness, and points forever to the real glory of virtue. He walks with healing amid all this world's sorrows to tell everywhere the helpfulness of the Balm of Gilead.

I know how wide apart to-day are the theories of human relationship, but I am full convinced that amid the turmoil, and a partial reason for much of the restlessness of our day, is the truth our Christ is teaching. Samuel Johnson wrote an epitaph for Oliver Goldsmith which, in its largest sense, and flung on unto the horizons of human destiny, may be said of Jesus Christ: "He left nothing he did not touch, and touched nothing he did not adorn."

Someone has written a verse about man, constructed out of that strained contrariness which is within us because infinite extremes seem to forever tug at all our hearts.

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,  
How complicate, how wonderful is man!  
How passing wonder, He who made him such,  
Who centered in our makeup such strange  
          extremes;

From different natures, marvelously mixed,  
Connection exquisite of distant worlds;  
Distinguished link, in being's endless chain,  
Midway from nothing up to Deity:  
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorbed,  
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine;  
Dim miniature of greatness absolute,  
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!  
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!  
A worm! A god!"

—Young's Night Thoughts.

Who can teach us the truth about man? The two great words in Jesus' teaching that bear upon interpretation are father and brother. He has driven the fatherhood of God into universal attention. He must proceed to the conclusion, the most vital and revolutionary for sociological teaching the world has ever had—we are all children of this Father, therefore brethren. This is indeed the foundational declaration of social relation to which this aspiring world, constantly puzzled at its tangling relationships, is turning in hope. Upon this teaching stand all our claims of human rights. Jesus Christ was big enough and stood high enough to see the whole truth of man. He saw it to lie not in his possessions, nor in the culture he had attained, but only in the deeper fact of the soul. Man is great for what he is, not for what he has, nor

even for what he has done. He is primarily great for what he is. Christ stands for God's poor and for the Devil's poor. He stands for every friendless and suffering one. He yearns for the lapsed and submerged masses. One day Cardinal Du Bois appealed to the great surgeon Bourdon, and said, "Doctor, because of whom I am I want a special treatment." The great doctor replied, "My Lord Cardinal, the poorest of my patients is a prime minister in my eyes." This high estimate of manhood held by our Christ; held against every plea of station, race, or condition; held in intrinsic measurement of genuine value for its own sake, will yet bring in the Golden Age. It is the solvent of our risingly great social problems. I declare my unbounded faith in Christ's doctrine of man, as we stand looking more nearly at humanity as a whole than our race has ever been in the estimate of common judgment before. I have faith in Christ's estimate. It will accomplish the end of the unfriendliness of man. It will bring us a way to avoid strikes and lockouts and all their attendant hatreds. It will establish the Prince of Peace against wars and rumors of wars. It will bring us a world of brotherhood.

## CHRIST A FRIEND

“A friend of publicans and sinners.”—

Matt. 11. 19.

THE friendship of Jesus Christ to mankind. “A friend of publicans and sinners,” it says here. That is friendship’s test.

A friend. There is no influence more powerful in its grip upon human life than the influence of pure friendship. When once we can stand Jesus Christ clearly before the world as a friend, a friend empowered and perfected and made precious by the fact that he is also divine, then will this Christ get an entrance into life he has always been entitled to, and yet so oft refused by friendless men. I count it the very greatest privilege of my little life to go everywhere I can go, and to say without qualification to every life I can persuade to listen to me, that God has provided a real friend for every one of us. There is no longer a friendless creature.

Some time ago in our city during a period of concentrated interest upon our united works of charity, a poster of rare impress was used. It touched every heart as from show-windows,

and billboards, and newspapers, everywhere, there was flown before our gaze the crutched form of a badly crippled little girl, as she hobbled her way across a squalid threshold, and under the picture these blazing words, "Suppose nobody cared." How it stirred our care! That appealing picture was flown before a whole city whose sense of helpful friendliness had been cultivated by a divine friend who has been awakening genuine friendship across the human story for centuries now. Christ has made folks care. He cares, and his interest has caught in humanity's heart.

When Christ came such things as now grip a whole world in ministrant response were never dreamed of. Beggary was the only alternative, and the ways of the world were lined with pitiful begging. He found the insane turned out from their fear-struck homes, and driven by that fear to dwell among the tombs and in the mountains. He found the lepers sitting in their compelled isolation crying in their helplessness, "Unclean! unclean! unclean!" as the very best the law could devise for them. He found the poor begging for the crumbs that fell from rich men's tables. But while I cannot now trace here the wonderful growth and systematic service which has gone throughout the world on the impulse of



this divine Friend's friendship, I am ready to declare that now what was first recognized as the ministry of such a friendship has become both State and national policy, and everywhere the genuineness of that fine service has become our law, and the public taxes itself to care as a duty for that which we first learned as the kindliness of a friendship.

The infinite kindness and tender thought of God toward mankind is seen in the friendship of Jesus Christ for man more keenly than in any other way. Friendship is cosmopolitan. It needs no interpreter. It speaks the universal language. There is no life that is not susceptible to it. It wins where everything else fails. So universal is the interest in the claims of friendship that our great writers have written their most searching stories, bidding for sympathy in their heroes, around the betrayal of what friendship means. So thoroughly do we sympathize with one whose friendship has been betrayed that we will follow him to extremes, and excuse his conduct in our loyalty to what he has had to suffer. Victor Hugo lays carefully this security for his hero when he makes ready to let him go through a course of conduct that without extreme sympathy would be hard at times to justify. The introduction of Jean Valjean is

based upon the betrayal of a very dear friend. Friendship was bartered for personal protection. Too low an altar for such a sacrifice. With such a preparation we are won in expectant and sympathetic appreciation to the ways of a man who is to wade deep in human sorrows. If you can ground the story of a character on such sympathy, you can then let him go almost anywhere, and he will still be loved and pitied and excused. He can even fail utterly, and be sure to fail with our love and pity. Of course that will not justify failure. Nothing will do that. But it does testify to the fact that friendship is held precious in this world, and its abuse is inconsolable.

George Eliot has made this same fact the strong foundation of her master story, *Silas Marner*. I speak often of Marner, for his experience is an eloquent putting. He thought he had a friend. But personal danger was too much for him in a test, and he sold his honor and his friendship, and to save himself from prison willingly added lying to his guilt, and betrayed Marner into the rough hands of a punishment he should have borne himself. Marner, seeing friendship false, lost faith in everybody and everything. As he does so, you unconsciously wander along behind him saying, "I don't really blame you." He

grew to hate everybody. You are suspicious yourself. You don't blame him for becoming a stingy old miser. You sit beside his spinning-wheel with an eagerness to translate it into more yellow gold to hide away in the secret tile of the floor. You count eagerly the growing yellow pile, and feel it is to be trusted. Gold won't betray you. Gold is honest. You come to love it too. You fall asleep as did he with his tired face pillowed in that he had come to trust. A thief stole the gold. Friendless and goldless, the poor, stark figure goes staggering out the cabin door into the storm just feeling about in the darkness. As he went away leaving the door ajar, the flicker of the friendly fire on the hearthstone guided to the shelter a little wearied child whose mother had died under a tree. Helpless and worn with crying, the little girl crept in and cuddled down in the warm and went to sleep. The bitter old gold-shorn miser found her there. I cannot tell here the fascinating story, but Marner found a new interpretation of life there. She did at last bring him back again to a sympathetic interest in mankind, as he worked for her. She broke down his hatred and suspicion of all that is lovely, as she compelled him to bring to those cabin walls some pictures to brighten it. She drove

out his disbelief in God too, and led him back once more to the faith and love of an early day, as she lisped at his old knee her simple child prayers, and kindled prayer again in his own soul. At last when, in her lovely girlhood, she chose to cling to him because of her real love for him, and refused houses and lands offered her by her natural father who had deserted her when she wandered motherless and homeless into an old miser's cabin door, she there making choice of Marner broke down the walls of hatred and suspicion of all human relationships, and brought him again to realize the truth of human love. It is a story of the power of friendship.

Thank God for a friend. I believe in friendship. I believe there are friends. I believe there is an absolute Friend. I am sure the human story everywhere has been lightened and is being lightened by the reflection of the perfect friendship of the perfect Friend, as he more and more brings his friends in constructive helpfulness into a whole world's life of need. I know God knew exactly what he was doing when in Christ he chose to make himself known to publicans and sinners as a friend. Folks can understand God thus. It seems to be the very evidence we had suspected. We ourselves may fail in it often, but

we understand it, and we stand expectantly toward God this way. We would make his friendship immeasurable. We even carry a measure of such judgment against all friendship, and cannot easily set any bounds in a limit for excuse in failure. Friendship is one of our most sacred characteristics. I was sitting in a hotel room in Sault Sainte Marie one winter's day engaged in some writing. As evening came on I decided I would go for a walk in the crisp north air off Lake Superior. I walked down along the great ship canal. A man stood peering through some marine glasses out toward the storm-lashed lake. For days a wind storm had blown there. Just as I came by, the watcher said, "They're coming." No one else being near I supposed I had right to speak, and I replied, "Are they? I am glad. Who are they?" I was greatly surprised and pleased to find out that the little tugboat Iowa was coming in from the great mad winter-lashed lake that had been battering many great ships badly, and had beaten one to pieces on some shoals. The Midlar was a hundred hours overdue. No one knew where she was. But out into that storm had gone that little tugboat with its brave crew in search for the battered ship. It happened to be my privilege to thus be standing there at the lock

when the Iowa drew up with every one of the thirty-three men of the Midlar, and their dog, men whose names had been posted across our papers as lost. How we grabbed those fellow's hands, and pulled them ashore! There were only a few of us there when they came in, but the whole city and the whole country was in sensible appreciation of the fact that men would go out there in such a sea to hunt other men in peril. It stiffened my soul. The help of it has not yet gone out of me. Nor will it ever. Thank God for men who will not count life dear unto themselves if they can thereby save some. There is genuine friendship in the world, and that is the way it works. There is no more rugged element of conduct than friendship. And he who stands to represent it as a prime element of his life must indeed walk with brave tread, and this we hold as prime essential in the life of our Lord.

That is, after all, one of the very fundamental facts for us to know about God. Anything that will help us to understand that is a plain help to the progress of our faith. I am sure the very severe strain of the Great War threw us hard back upon that fact. We had come to put very much religious interpretation in the hands of scholasticism. Plainer and more

human matters had pretty well lost their religious significance. But the great trying matters that were hurled squarely into our hearts, and went crashing in experience through the whole gamut of our feelings, made us appreciate, and the most brilliant scholar with all his culture too, crushed in heart and soul, appreciated also, that, after all, when we are brought squarely up against the great ultimates in life and death, we must realize that our real religious formulas can be expressed in brief and common words in the great fundamentals of experience. God is our Father. Christ brings us to him. Prayer is real. Guidance is available. Death is not the end. There are many and very interesting matters our scholars can work out in their studies, and our theologians can adapt in their creeds. But if we but know that Jesus Christ is real, and that he is our absolute Friend, then, as someone has put it, "our feet are on the plain man's road that leads straight to God and men cannot fail there." That is why just plain friendship seems always so evidencing of religion. Christ is such a friend. No matter how beautifully friendship may show itself here among men, the haunting and pre-empting claim is always attendant, "There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a

brother." He is a friend of publicans and sinners, and publicans and sinners have never had an over supply of friends either.

The friendship of this great Friend makes friendliness among us. There is nothing more needed to-day in the hard problems brought by evil than the constructive helpfulness of Christ's reflecting friends. There is no more preachable gospel to the hard places to preach to in this world, than the fact that Jesus Christ is God's yearning friendship seeking to get close to man. We are spending vast fortunes in pursuit of things to make living a little less burdensome and to put prized luxury into life. We are in mad pursuit after whatever will brighten, or even promise to brighten, our too oft dimming hearthstones. We are sending vast armies of men into the strain and exhaustion of deep mines in pursuit of things to dazzle our delight. We are spending a discouragingly vast sum of money to keep the laws effective and insure the safety of home and property. I need not enlarge the list of our endeavors. I do, however, believe that an infusion of genuine friendship among us would bring us more of every one of the things we are really after, and bring them with far greater efficiency. Every issue of our papers brings be-



fore us the falter of all these things we eagerly seek. I could easily match an actual case against each of these lines of endeavor I have listed.

Take this one, for example, the vast expenditure for vice and crime. We are, in America alone, expending a sum that runs well into ten billion dollars on our fight with evil by law. There are vast numbers of men and women in sin to-day because they have no friendships in goodness. Men and women are constant patrons of our jails, and what our officers of the law lightly call repeaters, whose stories are founded in the friendlessness of life. The absolute loss of real, pure friendship out of a life is about as fatal a blow as can be struck at that life. God knew exactly what he was doing when he chose to match against the world's hard sorrow and sin the divine friendship of his own Son. That friendship is reflected in every friendliness his friends bring in influence among men. There is no finer expression of the applicable power of Christianity in the world to-day than that which radiates from the friendships of the friends of Christ.

One of the most helpful women we have ever had among us has found the entrance into and the exercise of all her influence,

through the friendly helpfulness of her tireless belief in unfortunate women. For years she has been laboring in the jails of our country in the interest of those who are brought there for the first time, because she has discovered what the friendlessness of such an hour has produced.

In one of our large cities she was told one day that her fine-sounding theory was good talk, but was pitifully helpless with the class of women they had to handle. She replied in a calm confidence, "You never brought in here a prisoner I could not manage." The officers broke into a unison of laughter.

"We would sure like to see you handle 'Old Sal.' "

"I would like to," replied the fine, gentle, Christian friend.

"The next time she is in, we will call you, and you will not wait long either."

It was but a few days later, early one morning, Mrs. Barney was called to the telephone.

"Old Sal is here."

The friend went down to the jail. She asked to be shown to the cell. The sergeant said it would not be safe for her to go. Pointing to four officers with clothes torn and faces bleeding, he said, "There is her work. It is always the same story."

"Never mind that," said this quiet woman.  
"Show me her cell."

Before starting down the corridor Mrs. Barney asked for the prisoner's name.

" 'Old Sal' is all we call her," was the reply.

"Yes I know, but I want her real name."

"It is a long time since we booked her here as any other. I will have to go well back in the records."

"I want her real name," was the insistent request.

The name was found, the door was opened, and Mrs. Barney walked down the corridor. When she came to the cell door she saw a wild creature crouched in the corner. Her gray, disheveled hair, her torn garments, her blazing eyes of hatred, all making a picture of suspicious watchfulness.

"Good morning Mrs. —," said Mrs. Barney.

"Where did you get that name?" snapped back the startled woman.

Without answering the question the friendly woman said as she came quietly near, "Sarah, do you remember the first time you were ever brought here?"

"Oh, my God," she cried, "don't I? I spent the whole night crying seated on this hard floor."

"Suppose, Sarah, there had been a kind,

gentle Christian woman here to have received you, and to have talked with you, do you think your life might have been different?"

"I'm sure it would."

"Well, I am trying to get a woman appointed to this jail for that very thing. A friend for girls when brought here first, and I thought you would help me."

"Me help you! Is there anything I can do?"

All this time Mrs. Barney had been drawing nearer to the poor wreck, and was now kneeling beside her on the floor, gathering up her torn, grizzled hair; fastening it up with pins taken from her own hair; pulling together the torn threads of her garments, and fastening them with pins taken from her own. The work being done, Mrs. Barney arose and said, "Now, Sarah, we are going into the courtroom. If you will be good, they will appoint a woman here. Shall I go in on your arm, or will you go in on mine?"

That rough, fierce woman, looked at the gentle chaste lady and replied, "I'm stronger than you are; you had better take my arm."

Thus they went in, Mrs. Barney leaning on the proud arm of that hardened criminal, who never before had gone in there, save by sheer muscular force. "Old Sal" restrained herself wonderfully and answered every question.

Once she swore at an officer, but apologized. Everyone was amazed. A woman was appointed to that jail. "Old Sal" became Sarah in reality, for she found through this friendly woman the Divine Friend of sinners, and in his saving friendship she lived a new life, and is to-day victoriously recorded above, for she died in the sweet peace of Him who is still the Friend of sinners.

I have given you this familiar story of reflecting friendship just to say, in the name of Christ, that God has no finer contact with this world than that whereby his friendship to mankind becomes known. We have missed him often in great mystery. We should not overlook him in the fine experiences of the heart. God knew the world when he matched its dangers with the friendship of his Son. You and I fail. We are select in our friendships. We have to be. God alone can be prodigal there. We could doubtless, all of us, be more friendly than we are, but our limit is still close drawn. I therefore point to Christ the Divine Friend as about as perfect a relationship as God has to this world. He is able to be a friend. He understands us all. Trifles do not influence him. We find trifles, such as money, or influence, or culture, to be constant variants of our friendships. Not so Christ.

He offers himself, and befriends us when want, and danger, and loss, and ignorance, and sinfulness are all on the lists.

Emerson says, in that fine essay on Friendship, that the genuine friend must have two outstanding qualities—truth and tenderness. Christ is perfect in each. We have a natural desire for someone to whom we can go in unfaltering confidence the very same as we feel when we sit alone to search our own souls. There is some strange reticence in every human contact. We are never really natural. My real friend must be, and I must know him to be, fearlessly true. The professional friend who endeavors to tickle me with compliments gets my shallow laugh. In an age wherein we have grown used to the persistent demands of policy, we need a genuine sincerity. In that essay of Emerson's, to which I made reference a moment ago, he declares we are seldom able now to go erect. Everyone we meet has some matter of deference to which we must pay attention. But no real friend will ever make me lisp or stoop or assume an unnatural attitude. I am ashamed of every insincerity before him. All this is supremely so of Jesus Christ. I can only meet him at the door of truth. I know he is true. He therefore can meet me in my faults

as well as in my virtues, he forever strikes the ideal.

Agos ago Plato, the consummate figure still in the story of philosophy, cried out with a desire that the moral law might become a living personality, so that beholding him, mankind might stand amazed and transformed at his beauty and sufficiency. The philosopher knew that mere abstractions were too cold ever to gather in helpfulness the hungry souls of mankind. It was a cry out of the night. It was a cry from the highest peak unaided human feet could climb in their search after God. That cry expressed exactly what happened. Jesus Christ did what philosophy realized must be done. We cannot reach God. God we must have. God must reach us. That is Christianity. Christ came, emerging from all the surrounding mystery of the infinite, to tuck himself into the humblest ways of the finite, and finding a mangled entrance he emerged upon the whole world. He started from his plainest place on a trail of friendship that failed no door.

He is a Friend indeed. When great old Jonathan Edwards came up to die, he went about it in the planful manner in which he had lived. He tenderly and beautifully called all his dear ones to his bedside and bade them

farewell. To all the assembled friends who had been drawn close in the departure of such a soul, he made most impressive farewell. Then, turning, with rapture upon his face, he looked upward and called out in triumphant confidence, "And now, Jesus of Nazareth, my true, my never failing Friend"; and went away with him forever.

"Friend of sinners! Lord of glory!

Lowly, Mighty! Brother, King!

Musing o'er thy wondrous story,

Grateful we thy praises sing:

Friend to help us, comfort, save us,

In whom power and pity blend—

Praise we must the grace which gave us

Jesus Christ, the sinner's Friend!"

C. Newman Hall, The Methodist Hymnal, No. 130.



## CHRIST A SAVIOUR

“He shall save his people from their sins.”

—Matt. 1. 21.

NEVER do the poor stammering words we are able to command seem so poor and unworthy of use as they do when we dare with them to endeavor to tell, what by experience we know is untellable, the sacred fact of what Christ means as a Saviour from sin. The experience has been so rich and so very striking in many lives, that about it have grown a number of phrases which are commonly used, and yet which upon analysis call for explanation. They are saturated with experience which often talks in language not quite logical. In fact, I am not personally very keenly concerned to follow closely on the trail of the soul's greatest experiences with a cold measure of logic anyhow. I read an essay, I remember well, by that very keen-minded English scholar and preacher, J. Brierley, with the title, “On Being Saved.” It was one of those characteristic articles of his in which his always inquisitive mind went wandering about among the well-known phrases that are

commonly used in expressions of our experience. He was inquiring as to the legitimacy of the use of such phrases unless they were truly clear in their meaning. I remember he did agree that whether we were just correct or not, we did really mean something, because the youngest and the most vigorous of all our Christian organizations, the Salvation Army, actually found its title in the language.

It is not so much in consideration of the language values of familiar phrases that have lived across many years that I am now concerned, as it is with the true experimental facts from which those phrases may have sprung, and which, in a more or less degree of perfection, they are trying to express. Renan aimed one of his keenest darts at religion in a saying that, "At the outset a new religion is often nothing but a new kind of literature." This, of course, afforded him an approach for an attack upon much which Christianity brought in new phrases, and among them all there is not one so significant and so distinguishing as the announcement of a salvation which was to be experienced.

The very gospel of Jesus Christ is the proclamation of the fact of One who does here and now save people from sin. There is no need to go on a long search, as J. Brierley did,

in that article to which I made reference, to find what there is to be saved from. He looked at fear, and superstition, and a number more of the things from which a progressive race has been forging its own freedom. But all that is not in the mind when we speak of the personality of a Saviour from sin. Dr. Henry van Dyke has put it powerfully in that most helpful book of his, *The Gospel For An Age of Doubt*, that has helped me across all the years of my ministry, for it came into my possession when I was in my earliest ministry, and has never lost its place in my library, nor in its interpretive value to me of the character of my Lord as the personal and sufficient Saviour of sinful men and women. This, after all, is the point of chiefest interest in Christ's earthly relationship to our race.

In its longer perspectives, and lying over beyond the present experiences, of course this deals with the destiny of the soul, stretching away into whatever its infinite to-morrow may ever mean. It is, however, with its immediate present meaning I am now concerned, for with this we are on the certain ground of experience, and with destiny we are bound to be in the realm of speculation no matter how satisfied the pronouncements of our theology may be. Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin

is immediately related to the life we know here now. The testimony of this great fact does not depend upon some post-mortem information we are required to obtain. This field we know as human, and where all the tests that wring the soul seem to have their perfect working, is the sufficient scope for our inquiry now. We understand the idea of a Saviour when it is interpreted squarely against life as we know life—life where responsibility haunts every step; life where a blunder is fatal and good judgment is capital, and love is sweet and hate is bitter; life where sin abounds and grace also abounds. Out of everything life can come to mean here and now, we can bring testimony to establish the meaning of Jesus Christ the Saviour from sin. Whatever sin may mean, in all the far reaches that run on into destiny, and that wrought out the justification for the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth, we may not be able to comprehend. But there is a present experience with sin we cannot doubt. There are a heartbreak, and a sorrow, and a deep loss, which no one can doubt, that unite their testimonies to declare that if Jesus Christ had no mission whatever toward the soul's to-morrow, what he does here and now for the lives of those who will accept and follow him is

enough to set a passion of appreciation across a whole world.

There is, in spite of all its genius, a helpless breakdown before humanity. Man comes to the place where he knows he cannot help himself. He comes to it in this present world too. He needs no theology to know it. It breaks in upon his experience. With great luxurious stone palaces to dwell in, with glowing furnaces to warm him while the storms howl at his casements, with cellars stored with food against a tardy spring, still this man, who has worked out his mortal ease to extreme ministry of comforts, awakes to appreciate that something is still unreached, and he must look further if he is to be at ease. In tent of hides or in granite palace his soul still hungers. For actual soul hunger there is no more satisfaction to be found in a fifty-story building than in a crude cabin. Rich gossamers and sparkling jewels have no more genuine ministry here than have the crude furnishings worn by our frugal forefathers. Out at Warwick Castle, in that quaint and history-filled little town, stands a most interesting little chapel. The famous rich sinner who lived there left a great fortune to build and maintain in that chapel a perpetual prayer for his soul. It was an effort of a man

who had everything else, to also arrange for that yet great yearning of the soul. It was an utterly false expression, of course, and to-day the poor tomb is quite worn out though showing everywhere in fragmented loveliness what it once was. Someone ran away with the endowment, hence the promised prayers ceased. So it is perhaps a perfectly good outcome for the miserable folly that would ever have declared itself in the use of such tactics, but it is nevertheless a pitiful and eloquent witness to the fact of the consciousness of the need of the human soul.

Oh these hungry hearts of ours! Who can satisfy them? Is there no balm in Gilead? Where is our God? These are the cries that have been welling up along the whole route we call human.

Every soul is individual. In its own individuality that soul preserves this great reserved right our God maintains for himself in every life. Compelled in the deepest and most problematic part of your life to live alone, you turn naturally there in your lone helplessness to God. In these secret places we cherish weary doubts, and misgivings and suspicions and fears, which seem to destroy all inward peace, and take the real sparkle from our eyes and the elasticity from our steps. To be sure,

we often put on a bold make-believe. There is much hypocrisy in laughter even. The bright talker and the merry jokester go home when the banquet is done, and on the familiar threshold meet that veiled sorrow, and shut the door to the world as the curtaining shadows of the real truth draw close again. How much the world has laughed at the silly Charlie Chaplin, but how very, very little it has ever laughed with him! Opie Read, one of the gladdest seeming souls, whose bright, rippling stories have brought fine laughter from vast audiences, and have been placed in our libraries with sure confidence toward some dull day, knew life far, far beyond its laughter. He has told us in one of his books a pathetic fact of being compelled in order to make a living, and meet his contract to publishers, to rock the cradle wherein lay one of his babes dying, even while he actually wrote lines that were designed to make the world laugh. With a breaking heart he was penning the hypocrisy of laughter. He says that sometimes even to this day, he sees quoted in papers those very things, as words from the genial sunny-souled Read, things he penned when his baby was dying and his heart was breaking.

The human heart wants comfort, and the

heart-broken man endeavoring to write jokes for a living, out of the tragedy and sorrow in experience, feels out in the darkness for some help. He wants someone who can fully enter into all his sorrows and joys, and this is the divinely preserved gate, through which God in Christ is to enter the life of man. There is a longing in every soul. Just what it is may not always be recognized, but that fact is the fadeless Star of Bethlehem that forever shines before us. It is the sign under which Christ comes. I hail this gracious fact—the Saviour of men.

The conscious need of a Saviour is universal. It is easily realized in that broken, wretched sinner upon whose conduct sin has left its most bitter impress. But in those so-called better situations of life, when sin has not yet been able to drape its victim in rags; where debauchery has never been quite able to win; where culture has retained its proud place, there too lurks the same sense of need.

Jesus Christ identifies himself with us in life, to find the intimate place of his saving power among us. He cast in his lot with us, accepted the very humblest abasement, endured all the scorns and thorns of hatred and persecution, met every temptation, and died rather than fail in the extreme test to which



he was subjected as Saviour of the race. I am never surprised to know folks love him, and trust him and worship him. And on the other hand, I am always amazed when I meet those who do not.

Somewhere, some time I read the convincing story of a Moravian missionary who had gone in genuine love of his mission to the West Indies Islands to labor among the slaves there. There was no compromise in the genuineness of his sincerity, but he was laboring under a handicap he did not realize. He tried the very best he knew, and preached the most honest, humble, appealing sermons he could work out, all to no avail. He never so much as even received a respectable hearing. The honesty of his purpose and the sincerity of his effort were of no avail. The slaves were driven so hard they seemed to care for nothing but the mere physical balance offered by rest when the work was done. They were off to the fields at earliest morn, and home only when darkness made work impossible. When they staggered into their cabins for the night they sat down to gnaw their crusts of bread, and then to fling themselves in utter exhaustion upon their straw beds for rest. The missionary was powerless. Even beyond the physical handicap of the worn slaves was the

added fact that he was a white man, and white men were their oppressors. He also remained all day at home, while they toiled unto utter weariness in the sun. Why should they hear him?

That missionary had a soul as large as his task. He saw the difficulty, and hesitated not to take the extreme step. He actually sold himself to their master, who put him right in the gang with them. He wore their bondage also. For that sweet privilege of proving beyond question that his ministry to them was not limited by hardship, but that it rather sprang from pure love and the real desire of genuine service, he actually worked beside them in shackles, as a slave also, and suffered as did they, and came home worn to exhaustion beside them.

While they slaved together he told them the thrilling story of the gospel. He told it to them then in language more eloquent than he could ever frame in the pulpit. He told them how Jesus Christ took upon himself the likeness of man, and came to this earth to live among those he came to save. The beautiful sacrifice he himself was making in order to find a relationship in their suffering by which he could get a hearing, had far outdistanced any words he could speak, and he won their

hearing, and the love of the Christ he had come to tell them of won their lives also.

I met just such a man one day on a wonderful health-farm out West, and the thrill of his fine devotion was in every heart there. He was a skilled physician, a graduate of Johns Hopkins, and a practitioner of fine experience in one of the larger eastern cities. Struck with tuberculosis as the price he had paid in endeavoring to save his much-beloved sister, he had offered himself to the work of the health-farm. He brought no capital other than skill and devotion. He was tireless in his ministry. A hero of absolute service, he was giving his whole time and skill to save those disease-struck patients. The Board of Control called him before them one day, and insisted, against his protest, on giving him some sort of a modest salary. He protested so vigorously, they finally compromised on the meager amount of ten dollars a month, which he agreed to accept for use in buying any little equipment he might desire in his work. He was troubled by it however. He could not sleep for the feeling he had that he had compromised his absolute sacrifice. I was present at the meeting of the Board the day it was convened at his request, that they might rescind their former action, and with-

draw that little payment which he insisted was ruining his service. He insisted that those sick men might lose interest in his work if they knew he was receiving anything for it. He had brought his life out there to be put into that work on the absolute basis of love.

It is the power of that measureless and unrewarded devotion, devotion in the terms of divinity that manifests itself in the relationship of Christ to us, that gives him his great attraction. The cross of Jesus Christ, as a great fact, not as a theological controversy, is the place where God got on a basis to meet sinners. We need not be confounded by its results because we cannot frame some satisfactory explanation of its reason. Mankind had for long held the wrong conception of God's nature. Men feared God, and dreaded the very idea of his approach. The long, long story of man's relationship to God had been written in the terms of dread, and the best religion could do was to sit in awe at the great unspeakable name.

One of the most famous passages in all the great literature of the past is Homer's well-told story of Hector as he was starting out for battle. He turned to bid farewell to his family. His wife and little son came amid the throng of admirers to greet him. That great

warrior-father put out his arms to his son that he might catch him up for one fond caress. But when the lad saw the great shining helmet, and the wild waving plume blown by the wind, he was afraid and refusing to go to the offered arms, clung to his mother. Then the warrior became a real father, and snatching the great iron thing from his head, he laid it aside, and the little frightened lad, recognizing his beloved father, leaped eagerly into his arms, and with a laugh of assurance clung to his neck while he was fondled in the real love which his father had for him.

Famous and familiar figure that it is, I realize how imperfect it is, and yet how it does help us to catch some flavor of the relationship which for ages made God a dread and a fear in the story of mankind. Sin made it so. The sense of the law against the conviction of sinfulness threw a shudder into the human soul. But in Jesus Christ God has laid that fact aside. In Christ the Saviour God stretches out his loving fatherly arms to reconcile and to draw us to him. That is the story of the atonement.

After all, we must acknowledge that this is the one place where Jesus Christ stands alone in the real greatness of himself. All these other elements of life in which we have been

studying him he made use of that he might attain to that concentrate point of character, his saviourhood. He was a great, good man, the perfect man. His manhood will ever be our inspiration to manliness. He was a wonderful teacher. Yet it is not strange that his disciples who sat at his feet to learn never went out to tell of him as a teacher. He was a very great reformer. In his coming could easily be heard, had we but the hearing of the ages, the coming tread of every great reformation. But that never became the message or passion of any of his immediate followers as the impress he left with them. There is just one real outstanding, dominating thing which glows all through the great Book of God, and flames in the presence of our Lord always. The long cry, which harked back across the weary sin-cursed expectant ages, and was lured to hopefulness by the voices of the prophets, was for a Saviour from sin. Not what he said, but that he died for us, is the burden of the New Testament, and the motive power which sent his disciples everywhere preaching. Whatever any of us may think or may not think about Jesus Christ, there can be no possible question as to what the men who wrote the New Testament thought about him. He was no Socrates, or Seneca, or Plato,

or Lincoln. His life was no mere incident that was given its fitting place in the long chain of evolution. It is impossible to turn into the Book of God, or to walk along the story of the establishment and history of the Church of Christ, and not be confronted everywhere with the fact, Jesus Christ, World Saviour and Redeemer. The sorrow and sting of sin have all been brought out clearly and keenly in the Bible, and the experience of all our souls has confirmed all that has been written. The darkness of this world, the stricken life we so oft must endure, the terror of death that lurks along our pathway—all these things stand convincingly. No one can question the fact that the Bible makes vivid the sinfulness of sin, but it is done that with every united testimony might be made more conspicuous the great uplifted cross, whose healing shadow falls significantly across it all. The Saviour from sin has been made manifest. "Exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

What a word that is for a world such as this! This world's fortunes are dust, and will soon crumble beneath the heavy tread of mortality. The hands that so eagerly now clutch what we prize will themselves soon

turn to mocking dust. One breath from off the mystic shores of eternity and that dust will be blown away forever. The stanchest thrones of earth are but shadows which vanish at the glance of the strong angel with the black pinions. Yet, if we accept this Saviour, we shall be lifted up, out of the dust of it all; up out of the crumbling debris of a world already trembling in the palsy of its mortality; up to everything that can be in the divine meaning of the fact that this Saviour came freely to give us all things.

“O holy Lord! uplifted high  
With outstretched arms, in mortal woe,  
Embracing in thy wondrous love  
The sinful world that lies below!

Give us an ever-living faith,  
To gaze beyond the things we see;  
And in the mystery of thy death  
Draw us and all men after thee!”  
*W. W. How, The Methodist Hymnal, No. 145.*







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